

## Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /136 W

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R 170805Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9031

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USSAG NKP

CINCPAC

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 3931

USSAG FOR GENERAL O'KEEFE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, MOPS, LA

SUBJECT: AP INTERVIEW WITH PHOUMI VONGVICHIT  
ON AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBOFF SOUGHT DETAILS OF ASSOCIATED PRESS  
(AP) CORRESPONDENT JENKINS' RECENT INTERVIEW WITH PHOUMI  
VONGVICHIT, FIRST LATTER HAS ACCORDED TO WESTERN  
CORRESPONDENT, IN WHICH PHOUMI REPORTEDLY CRITICEZED  
U.S. AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. JENKINS SAID IT WAS CLEAR  
THAT HE HAD PUT PHOUMI ON UNCOMFORTABLE SPOT BY POSING  
QUESTION OF AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. PHOUMI TOLD JENKINS  
(ON DEEP BACKGROUND) THAT SAM NEUA HA DINSTRUCTED HIM TO  
PUT FORWARD HARD LINE ON AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE, ALTHOUGH  
HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED IT INTERFERED WITH HIS EFFORTS TO  
PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS WITH U.S. JENKINS APOLOGIZED TO  
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EMBOFF FOR NOT BROACHING SUBJECT OF RELEASE OF EMMET KAY

IN INTERVIEW, AND INDICATED HE WOULD NOT PURSUE SUBJECT OF AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE FURTHER. THIS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. END SUMMARY

1. BANGKOK WORLD, MAY 15, HEADLINED (AND FAR EAST WIRELESS FILE SAME DAY CARRIED) EXCERPTS FROM AP INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, IN WHICH LATTER CRITICIZED USG AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OVER LAOS AS VIOLATION OF LAO AGREEMENT.

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON AP REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS (AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL) MAY 16 TO INQUIRE ABOUT ATMOSPHERE OF INTERVIEW, WHICH IS FIRST PHOUMI HAS ACCORDED TO WESTERN CORRESPONDENT.

3. JENKINS SAID HE HAD GOTTEN INTERVIEW AFTER SUBMITTING WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO PHOUMI AT REQUEST OF FAR EAST ECONOMIC REVIEW (FEER), FOR WHICH HE SERVES AS "SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT" IN VIENTIANE. FEER QUESTIONS CONCERNED GENERAL ISSUES OF LAO FOREIGN POLICY--SUCH AS NEUTRALISM, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ETC.--NOT AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. PHOUMI HAD CALLED JENKINS TO HIS OFFICE MAY 14 TO HEAR HIM (PHOUMI) READ REPLIES. JENKINS WAS RETICENT ABOUT DISCLOSING PHOUMI'S REPLIES, SINCE THEY WILL APPEAR IN FEER NEXT WEEK AND HE DID NOT WISH TO HAVE THEM KNOWN IN VIENTIANE BEFOREHAND. HE DID MENTION THAT PHOUMI HAD HEDGED ON SUBJECTS OF RECOGNIZING PRG AND GRUNK, SAYING THESE WERE QUESTIONS WHICH PGNU HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED.

4. AFTER READING REPLIES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS, PHOUMI ASKED COURTEOUSLY IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER SUBJECTS JENKINS WISHED TO RAISE. FLUSTERED, LATTER ASKED FOR PGNU POSITION ON U.S. AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE.

5. JENKINS SAID PHOUMI WAS VISIBLY EMBARRASSED BY QUESTION. AT FIRST HE SAID, "IT IS NOT A SERIOUS MATTER." THEN, "OFF THE RECORD", HE MENTIONED HE HAD BEEN PLEASED BY GENERAL USG ADHERENCE TO LAOS AGREEMENT. HE WAS ALSO STRUCK BY FRIENDLINESS OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS HE HAD MET IN VIENTIANE. HOWEVER,

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RADIO PATHET LAO HAS CONSISTENTLY OBJECTED IN STRONG TERMS TO U.S. AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. THIS PLACED HIM (PHOUMI) IN DIFFICULT POSITION--SINCE, AS PGNU FOREIGN MINISTER, HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND ALL FOREIGN COUNTRIES. PHOUMI TOLD JENKINS THAT HE HAD REQUESTED SAM NEUA TO TONE DOWN "BAD WORDS" ON RADIO PATHET LAO ABOUT AMERICANS, BUT SAM NEUA REPLIED, "AS LONG AS AMERICANS VIOLATE AGREEMENT BY FLYING SPY PLANES OVER

LAOS, THEY MUST BE CONDEMNED." PHOUMI THEN MADE STATEMENT REPORTED IN AP STORY, INDICATING THAT IT WAS OFFICIAL PATHET LAO, NOT PGNU, POSITION.

6. JENKINS WAS IMPRESSED BY PHOUMI'S DIGNITY AND FRIENDLI-  
NESS. HE VIEWS PHOUMI AS SINCERE MAN WHOSE OPTIONS ARE  
LIMITED BY HARDLINE EMANATING FROM PATHET LAO HEADQUARTERS  
UNDER THUMB OF NORTH VIETNAMESE IN SAM NEUA.

7. WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAIL, EMBOFF TOLD JENKINS THAT  
PRESENT LEVEL OF AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE WAS SO MINIMAL THAT  
IT WAS NOT WORTH REPEATEDLY BRINGING TO PUBLIC ATTENTION,  
EMBARRASSING MEN LIKE PHOUMI WHO WERE DOING THEIR BEST TO  
PROMOTE LAO/AMERICAN COOPERATION IN HEALING WOUNDS OF WAR.  
MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE WAS RELEASE OF EMMET KAY. PATHET LAO  
RECALCITRANCE ON THIS ISSUE MIGHT COLOR AMERICAN VIEW OF  
COMMUNIST INTENTIONS AND SINCERITY TO DETRIMENT OF FURTHER  
PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION IN LAOS. JENKINS  
AGREED. WHERE HE WILL DROP AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE ISSUE  
REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

8. WE NOTE FROM SUCH REPORTS AS FBIS/BANGKOK 161020Z  
MAY 74 THAT PHOUMI'S TONE, EVEN IN INTERVIEWS WITH  
COMMUNIST CORRESPONDENTS, HAS BECOME RELATIVELY MODERATE  
IN CONTRAST TO THAT HE DISPLAYED SOME WEEKS AGO.  
WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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30 JUN 2005

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**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, MOPS, LA, (PHOUMI VONGVICHIT)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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